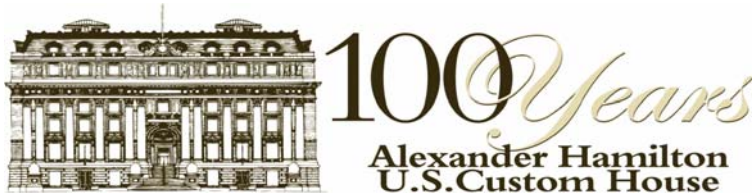




R2-07-102



### Lecture Kicks Off Custom House Centennial Celebration

(NEW YORK CITY - 1/26/2007) The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) is proud to announce a centennial celebration of the Alexander Hamilton U.S. Custom House at Bowling Green in lower Manhattan, New York City. Along with its partner agencies in this celebration including the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian, the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of New York, and U.S. Customs and Border Protection, GSA is pleased to present a lecture by architectural historian Sharon Irish titled *Cass Gilbert as Interloper*.

This lecture is the first in a series of events that will be presented throughout 2007 at this landmark building to celebrate its centennial year. Designed by architect Cass Gilbert and completed in 1907, this historic building is considered one of the finest examples of Beaux Arts architecture in the United States.

WHAT: *Cass Gilbert as Interloper* \*  
A discussion by Sharon Irish, Cass Gilbert Scholar

WHERE: Alexander Hamilton U.S. Custom House Auditorium  
One Bowling Green (at the beginning of Broadway)  
New York, NY

WHEN: Thursday, February 15, 2007  
6:30 – 7:30

COST: Admission is free

*Individuals needing additional information can call (212) 264-3305 and leave a message. Calls will be returned.*

**\* Cass Gilbert as Interloper**

When in 1899 architect Cass Gilbert's design won the competition to build the U.S. Custom House in New York City, he excitedly wrote to his wife in Minnesota that "our ship has come in." Gilbert, viewed as a Midwestern interloper in New York City design circles as well as by local and state politicians, was not welcomed when he boldly moved his practice to New York. During the lengthy design and construction phases of the Custom House, Gilbert strengthened his ties to talented designers, powerful contractors, and skilled engineers, many of whom continued to help his office thrive through building skyscrapers in the city. With the renovation of the Custom House in the 1990s for use by the National Museum of the American Indian, "interloper" and "ships coming in" have gained resonance, as we look again at this Beaux-Arts building at the end of the Wiechquaeskeck Trail, one of the Algonquian trade routes.

**Dr. Sharon Irish** is an architectural historian at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, and author of Cass Gilbert, Architect: Modern Traditionalist (Monacelli Press, 1999), as well as several articles and chapters on Gilbert's New York buildings and architectural practice. More recently she has been researching the racialization of space, and has just completed a book manuscript on the California-based performance artist Suzanne Lacy.

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